





# THE PRIVATE ASYLUM: HOW I GOT IN AND OUT.

---

— AN —

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

"It is not the manner among the — to deliver any man to — before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him."—Acts xxv. 16.

BY A

*Clerical Ex-Servtne.*



LONDON :

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY PAGE, PRATT, & TURNER, 5, 6 & 7  
LUDGATE CIRCUS BUILDINGS, E.C.

R39684

# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
<i>Letter to the Lord Chancellor and reply</i> .. .. .. ..	4
<i>Petition to the Queen—Refused by the Prime Minister</i> .. ..	6
<i>Introduction—Lunacy laws—Medical treatment—Physicians' Certificates—Secret information—Supposed Conspiracy denied</i> .. ..	7
<i>The Private Asylum—Visit to Doctors—Bodily Examination—Prescription—Relations visit privately a M.D.—Imaginary Conversation</i> .. .. .. .. ..	10
<i>Marks of a failing mind—Too active—Village Doctor's opinion—New Medical Acquaintances—How it was managed—Certificates procured—The various events of the day—Reported to be a voluntary patient—Medical Phenomenon</i> .. .. ..	13
<i>Supposed delusion explained</i> .. .. .. ..	16
<i>Various Appeals and Answers—Asylum Proprietors—Commissioners—Mr. Spencer Walpole, to Relations, to a Medical Expert—Judicious treatment—To the Queen—Now lapsed into incoherency and imbecility transferred to England</i> .. .. ..	17
<i>Imaginary Canine Mental Examination, and Certificates—Petition not required</i> .. .. .. .. ..	20
<i>Eminent Medical Experts called in—Their reports and Lunatics' version—Gross ignorance</i> .. .. .. ..	21
<i>Another delusion explained—Dog drugged—Robbery by servant</i> ..	24
<i>Action against the Lunatic—Cost and damages</i> .. ..	25
<i>New invention described—By M.D.'s declared a proof of insanity, by Smoke Exhibition Jury decreed Honourable Mention</i> ..	26
<i>Further Certificates—Rebutted by Doctor's own conduct—Mental Physicians must back up one another</i> .. .. .. ..	29
<i>Suggestions for Amended Lunacy Act</i> .. .. .. ..	31
<i>Correspondence after 29 years renewed—Various questions required to be answered—Explanations about discrepancies in Petition demanded</i> .. .. .. .. ..	32
<i>Advice to Married Ladies—Medical Men—Relations—The Public</i> ..	37

De minimis (lege insanis) non euret lex.

THE RECTORY, SHENLEY,

June 27th, 1889.

To the LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND.

MY LORD,

The notice of an Amended Lunacy Bill brought up very vividly before my mind my detention in a Private Lunatic Asylum in Scotland in 1859, of the cause of which I was never able to obtain any explanation whatever. I had the honour lately to write to your Lordship on the subject, but my letter was merely acknowledged by your Lordship's secretary.\* I am told that the Committee of the House of Commons has no power to send for persons or papers, or to take any evidence with a view of introducing fresh safeguards against unjust detention. I had hoped that they would have obtained for me a copy of the various reports made by the Medical Proprietors of the Asylums to the Commissioners respecting my state, but the present ones refuse me this justice on the plea that all reports about patients are "*confidentially communicated to them.*"

As the head officer of the law, therefore, I appeal to your Lordship, and shall be perfectly satisfied if you will appoint any two or three persons who shall examine the certificates, one of them a scientific man, others of the legal or medical profession, who shall report to your Lordship whether I was ever a Lunatic at all, or how, having lapsed into *imbecility*, I was instantaneously cured.

There are also two legal points which I am desirous to have cleared up—

1st. Whether an action at law could be legally carried on against a defendant of which he had no notice, the same defendant being at that moment a lunatic in an asylum ?

\* This letter contained several suggestions for insertion into the Amended Lunacy Bill, for the benefit of the alleged Lunatics ; but of course, as coming from one of them, was treated with contempt.

2nd. Whether a lunatic who is pronounced by a High Medical Expert to be *incoherent* and *imbecile* in respect to an invention for saving fuel could a month before had Letters Patent Sealed regarding that very invention, and whether such a patent would be valid or not?

Such persons as your Lordship may select, if you are disposed to grant this request, I shall be quite willing to remunerate for their time, but I should greatly prefer, if I am not too bold, to state my case to some Members of your Lordship's House, who have taken an interest in the subject of Lunacy, but who are quite ignorant from their own experience, how injustice may be perpetrated under the sanction of law—and a Lunatic be treated far worse than a first-class misdemeanant.

I am, My Lord,  
Your obedient servant,  
HENRY J. NEWCOME.

HOUSE OF LORDS, S.W.  
July 6th, 1889.

SIR,  
I am directed by the Lord Chancellor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ult., and to say that the matter is not one with which he can interfere.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
HERBERT J. HOPE.

REV. HENRY J. NEWCOME.

We have heard of Jedburgh justice, which disposed of a suspected criminal by hanging him first and trying him afterwards. As I was not made to suffer the extreme penalty of the law, I now, failing in my application to the Lord Chancellor, and my petition to the Queen being rejected by the Prime Minister, appeal through the Press for a Commissioner in Lunacy to take all evidence before a jury of my countrymen, which I trust her Gracious Majesty will order. I in vain applied for a Commission to the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice at the time; which may now I hope, though reversing usual legal procedure and *ex post facto*, be granted, and which would, if granted at the time, have saved me at least £400 for the privilege of residing in a Private Asylum.

The Marquis of Salisbury was requested to present this Petition to Her Majesty, and to suggest any alteration if not in proper form :—

**The humble petition** of HENRY J. NEWCOME, of Shenley, Herts :

SHEWETH THAT—

The petitioner is a clergyman of the Church of England.

That many years ago, being in perfect health, he went for a holiday to Scotland accompanied by anxious relatives, who secretly consulted the proprietor of a lunatic asylum, who upon their statements procured the certificates of his wife and two of his own friends, physicians in Edinburgh, and inviting him to his house, reported him as a voluntary patient.

That he made numerous appeals to the Commissioners of Lunacy and to his friends for a visit, but in vain.

That at the end of nine months he was found by two other physicians to have become incoherent and imbecile, when transferred to another asylum.

That he has only lately obtained copies of the certificates, which he affirms do not contain one word of truth.

That to ascertain whether the reports made to the Commissioners on his admission and removal agree with the certificates, he requested from the present Commissioners a copy of those reports, which they refuse on the ground that they are **CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS**.

That when in confinement he applied in vain to the Lord Chancellor for a Commission of Lunacy or a writ of *Habeas Corpus* to bring him to London.

That his detention must have cost him about £500.

That he had no means of bringing the matter before a court of law nor could sue in *formâ pauperis*, and has suffered the stigma of having been a lunatic for a number of years, and that such a report, unless contradicted by some legal tribunal, may seriously affect the future of his grand-daughter.

That the greater number of the ten medical men who saw him are dead, and, therefore, he cannot subpoena them to give evidence.

That the Lord Chancellor, to whom, as having sole power to do him justice, he has appealed, declines to interfere, and that, therefore, the petitioner humbly appeals to your gracious Majesty to give such orders as may seem good that justice may be done.

And your petitioner will ever pray, &c.

22nd July, 1889.

DEAR SIR,—I am directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th enclosing a petition for presentation to her Majesty.

In reply his Lordship desires me to express his regret that the petition is not one which he can forward to the Queen.

I remain, faithfully yours,

REV. H. J. NEWCOME.

SIDNEY GREVILLE.

## INTRODUCTION.

---

Nought extenuate, and set down nought in malice.

TO "give a dog a bad name and hang him" seems to be equally applicable to his two-legged masters. A so-called lunatic gets but scant justice, and is the object among his fellow-creatures of either pity or fear. Few happily know anything of the practical working of the laws relating to Lunacy. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, and if I transgress this rule I can only say that the person chiefly aimed at is beyond the reach of all human censure. That a medical man, who was, as I understand, a Union doctor, should purchase an Asylum with the patients in it, claim to do whatever he chose with them, and be backed up by the Commissioners appointed by the legislature to protect them, may be reckoned to be quite right in Scotland, but does not agree with our English ideas of justice. If I am asked why I have let years pass away till nearly every one of the Medical men are dead with whom I made acquaintance, I can only reply that I knew nothing about the laws relating to Lunacy, and supposed that the members of the Medical profession were entrusted by the Legislature with the power to commit anyone who was reported to be dangerous to himself or others to the safe keeping of an asylum, while they communicated the case to the Commissioners, who would at once visit the person. Reading lately about certificates, petitions, and orders, I applied for a copy of the certificates relating to me, and was astonished to find that two physicians, who never asked me a single question, had declared on *soul* and *conscience* that they had separately examined me, and that I was suffering

from delusions about conspiracies, and that I was a Lunatic, and of unsound mind. In excuse for them, I can only suggest that some information which my relations had been secretly giving them about me some ten days before, had been remembered, and been supposed to have been derived from myself.

I feel, of course, that the accumulated evidence of relations, and at least of ten medical men, is strong against me, but TRUTH MUST PREVAIL. If there was any conspiracy at all, it existed between these parties, and had such a thing ever occurred to my mind, I should never have invited nervous relations to join me on a holiday tour, but have taken my far saner companions, my dogs alone, who never saw any change in me.

If the person, whoever it might be, who advised my wife to take the step she did, had been charged with four or five guineas a week for my board in the Asylums, I suspect that I should very soon have been pronounced to be perfectly recovered; or if my parishioners had found a shilling rate charged for my maintenance, I expect a deputation would soon have visited me, and insisted on taking me back with them.

---

---

---

## PREFACE.

---

IF any reader of the following pages asks who a lunatic can be, I reply that my name is that of the hero of one of Thackeray's most popular novels, that I am unfortunately the holder of a valuable living, and I can only describe myself as the unhappy victim of CONJUGAL and SISTERLY affection and care. If I know anything of myself, I should say that I have been, through a long life, what our parish doctor described this village when he first came to it as "dreadfully healthy"; for such persons whom he intended to have as patients for a month got well in a day. If I say that through life, though owning to a back, I have been unconscious, except on one or two occasions, of having a head or a stomach, I shall be pronounced as only proving myself fit to be the inmate of an asylum, unless I am permitted to explain myself, for have we not heard of a man in confinement who thought that he was headless? I never study, and any book or subject I do not understand at once, except the Bible, I leave alone. So much for *overwork*, which was supposed to have put my brain out of tune. My supposed delusions are simply explained in the following pages, but how should women know anything about horses and dogs, and, with a charity that thinketh no evil, believe that there can be such a thing as a dishonest servant?

If anyone should find himself, through the fears of an affectionate wife, inside a private asylum, he will at least learn from my experiences what *not* to do?

---

# THE PRIVATE ASYLUM.

## How I GOT IN AND OUT.

### CHAPTER I.

BEING out for a three months' holiday, and taking lodgings at 2 Maitland Street, Edinburgh, I was surprised when coming down to breakfast to see my wife and sister looking very distressed, and upon asking what was the matter, was told that I was "so ill." To satisfy them that their fears were quite groundless, I went off to the Infirmary or General Hospital and requested to see some of the medical men. I found about six at breakfast, and apologising for my intrusion, requested them carefully to examine me. They told me that I had better apply to some of the leading physicians, and gave me the names of Dr. Christison, Dr. Wood (the president of the Royal College), Dr. Dunsmure, and two others whose names I forget. I accordingly went to these. Dr. Christison rather smiled at the purport of my visit, but felt my pulse, asked me whether I felt any pain, took my guinea, and dismissed me. Dr. Wood made a more strict examination, felt my pulse, which was seventy-two, tried my breath with long inspirations, listened to my heart, and found lungs, stomach, liver, and other organs all sound. "Would he, then, write a few lines which I might take to my relatives?" "He would send me a certificate shortly." I waited three days, and then came the following :—"Mr. Newcome is in a very *excited state of mind*, and should immediately place himself under medical care." Quite surprised, I went at once to him, and asked what it meant; for it was clear that I was quite as calm as he was. "Well," he said, "put it by, and I will give you another." The other, however, did not arrive, and I thought no more about it.

I then went to Dr. Dunsmure. I told him my wife's

fears, said that she had a great opinion of his Profession, and at his request brought her to see him. He took her for a few minutes into another room, learnt from her that she feared my brain was failing, and had delusions about servants, and upon returning, asked me if I would take now and then a liver pill, giving me a prescription which was made up at Duncan and Flockhart's. Considering their mild nature, I took two of them, and in the course of about four hours had dreadful visions. Though aware it was broad daylight, I could not see; the sound of the railway whistle seemed like that of a trumpet, and I felt as if I should every moment die. These feelings returned more than once during the day, when they would suddenly pass off. Determined to take no more medicine, I at once regained my usual health and spirits, bought a carriage, and sent to England for my horse, and was daily out with my dogs on long walks or drives in the neighbourhood.

In the meantime my wife and sister had made acquaintance with a medical man residing about two miles from Edinburgh, reported to be very skilful in the treatment of mental disorders, and it seems had been describing me, and taking his opinion as to my state of health, fearing that my activity must be a symptom of a failing mind.\*

---

## CHAPTER II.

### \* IMAGINARY CONVERSATION.

---

*Scene—Balgreen.*

**TWO NERVOUS LADIES AND AN M.D.**

---

L. We have come to consult you about a relation of ours, hearing that you have made a special study of mental diseases.

M.D. Yes, that is a speciality which has engaged the attention of my partner and myself for a long period, and I believe that few of our profession have been so successful in detecting

the incipient stages of the disorder and treating them successfully. If not arrested in time the disease takes hold and the gravest results frequently follow. Will you describe the symptoms?

L. Our relation, a clergyman in Hertfordshire, has altered much in appearance during the last four months, and will not allow that he is ill in the slightest degree.

M.D. That we consider a very bad symptom. To be unconscious of disorder is the case of some of our worst patients; but what else?

L. He has had a number of things to do and has been out early and late and has not taken rest enough; we think that with a number of objects to occupy his mind he must have been *overworked*.

M.D. No doubt. Perfect rest and freedom from all excitement is quite necessary. I think I could ensure him that if he would place himself under my care. But I and my partner must see him. Could you induce him to come and dine with us, say next Wednesday? What are his usual habits?

L. He, instead of resting after meals, as he used to do, will jump up—rush about after one thing or another, and then, quite exhausted, lie down for an hour without a word, and calls it a mark of *HIGH HEALTH*.

M.D. Ah! that so-esteemed *High Health* is considered by the best authorities on Mental Disorders as a most dangerous symptom, a precursor of sometimes fatal illness: undue excitement of the brain succeeded by corresponding depression of the nervous power. But only taken in time it is curable by proper treatment, though we have never had such a case before us. It will be most interesting to the Medical Profession when reported. Now what other alteration have you detected?

L. He has taken up the opinion that he has been robbed, and that a neighbour was privy to it. He also says that his horse was tampered with, and that his dog was poisoned, and then that there was some dishonesty among the domestic servants.

M.D. I quite understand. It is a most usual form of incipient mental derangement—conspiracies and delusions. Now it is of the utmost consequence that those subjects should never be mentioned, and no doubt if he is removed for two or three years from the scene of them he will quite have forgotten all about them. While the case is in progress, under our special treatment for this form of disease, it is of great consequence that he should see as few of those he has known as possible. Friends may write and tell him all the home news, but must not be allowed to interfere with us in any way. You can report that under some sudden development of excitement he had

consulted two eminent Edinburgh physicians about his health, and that, having consulted them, their decision about his state was final, and that therefore he is residing with a medical man near Edinburgh.

L. Write a week after, "Dear Sir,—Our dear relation's delusions about his horse are returning, and therefore it is of the utmost importance that he should be placed under your care at once. But how is it to be done?"

M.D. It is very easy. I will call in the morning and ask you to fill up a paper, the words and statements I will dictate to you, and for the rest you may leave that to me. I shall give him an invitation to my house, so that no force will be necessary, and, of course, having come there of his own accord, he will be considered during his residence there a voluntary patient, and treated so. Man and wife being in the eye of the law one—either can act for the other, and so there is no need that he should sign this paper himself, which might be considered informal.

---

---

### CHAPTER III.

How my good wife got hold of this idea of a failing mind, I believe, was comparing me with a gentleman then living with our parish doctor, whose brain was softening, and who soon afterwards died. He used to walk rapidly about, but without any object, and occupied himself in constantly copying out his own poetry; whereas I, while very active, as I always am, had nearly half-a-dozen occupations, from one of which I turned to another. Again he was growing very thin, whereas I, though told I had lost thirty pounds, proved by the scales that I had not lost three. The doctor, too, with whom he resided, increased her alarm by saying that to be so active as I was, indicated something amiss, and that my pulse, which he never felt, must be running at 140, while it never exceeded 75.

This worthy friend, the village doctor, having generally but little to do, walked slowly at less than the rate of three miles an hour, while I, having many things to

interest me, in addition to my parish work, walked possibly beyond my usual five miles. In the course of ten years I do not think I ever had occasion for his services, and ignorant that I could at any time after exercise or meals lie down to sleep, as I always can, he had no business to report upon my state with only seeing me. My pony, which would stop dead at a word when in full gallop, nearly threw him out by doing so, which was attributed to my state of excitement.

Dr. L. had married a young lady whom I knew when a child, and kindly asked me to dine, where I met a grave looking old gentleman, a Dr. Smith, and was, I think, the first English clergyman he had ever met. I made myself as pleasant as I could, quite ignorant that I was passing through a Medical Mental examination. I drank no wine, and never touch it except it may be when dining out.

#### HOW IT WAS MANAGED.

I now come to a very memorable day—June 16th, 1859. I had advertised in the *Scotsman* for a house in the Highlands. Had some answers, among others one from a Mr. Machonochie, the minister of Glen Urquhart, Inverness. He came to breakfast, agreed to let me his Manse for three months, and then asked whether I could not take his Sunday duty, should he be unable any Sunday to return in time. I did not know whether the law would allow me, but with written prayers and sermon would do what I could.

11 a.m.—Went to service at St. John's.

12 a.m.—Found my late host, Dr. Lowe, making a call, who said that he was going for a drive, and would I accompany him? "I wish," he said, "to call on Dr. Wood." I went in, and after shaking hands, he said, "I am very glad you are going to put yourself under Dr. Lowe's care." I laughed, and replied, "There is no occasion; I am going on Monday into the north." "Will you wait," said Dr. Lowe for a minute, while I speak to Dr. Wood." In a few minutes he came out, and told the coachman to drive to Dr. Dunsmure.

Asking me how I was, I said, "Your medicine made me very ill, and I have taken no more." Again I was asked to wait in the carriage, and upon coming out, he said he was going further, and would not detain me, but should be glad to see me that afternoon.

12.45 p.m.—Walked back to Maitland Street and went up to pay my daily visit to a sick young lady in the house. Upon her thanking me for the loan of a copy of "Cosin's Devotions" I wrote off to Rivington's to send me one for her, sat down to dinner, and at about 2.45 walked off, according to my promise, to Dr. Lowe's house, where I found the same old gentleman, who gravely told me that in his opinion I was in an exceedingly excited state of mind, and refusing my offer to stay and dine, in this manner I found myself inside a Private Lunatic Asylum. My appearance there, reported to be a Voluntary patient, created some surprise, and led to various queries from two or three of the inmates. Why had I come? Why did not I go away? Had I been getting into a disturbance in the city? Had I been drinking? Had I been quarrelling with my relations or recklessly wasting money? Certainly none of these. Perhaps, then, somebody wished to get hold of my property. I must have been a Medical Phenomenon, able in one moment to reduce myself from a state of exceeding excitement of mind and lower my pulse to its normal condition, to sit down to tea, and in the morning and for every succeeding day to read the Bible and prayers at the request of two of the gentlemen with whom I found myself associated.

I now supposed that my relations had requested him as a medical man to give them his opinion about my state of health, and that I should satisfy his curiosity by answering any questions he might put to me in a way to allay any fears that my relations—wife, sister, and brother, might entertain. Evening, however, came, and nothing was said, and I was introduced to the two gentlemen mentioned above, and sat down to tea with them. I had not the slightest idea that a momentary call I had made that morning upon the two Edinburgh physicians with my new acquaintance at his request,

had been my examination as a lunatic, and that my relations had been secretly consulting this gentlemen, and informing the others that I was affected with *delusions*.

The history of one of these so-called delusions was simply this: I had some months before bought from a friend a valuable horse for which he was asking £100, but which he let me have for £60. The man who took charge of him was perhaps afraid of his high spirit, and took off his corn; at any rate, the horse, though stuffed with hay, fell off in condition; but the corn went all the same, and I believe the man, who had before been dishonest, sold it. His successor, an acquaintance of his, was, I suspect, in *collusion* with him, and to screen him, and prove that he had been unjustly accused, continued the same practice, for there was no husk of corn in the dung, and the horse was quite faint in a three-mile quick journey. I removed the horse to a stable in Barnet, and four days afterwards he could trot for any time at twelve miles an hour. Women, who could see no difference so long as an animal looked well, considered all this suspicion of mine as a *delusion*, and it was reported that I was going out of my mind, and I suppose readily believed, for my family looked alarmed, and acquaintances who heard the news began to look shy at me, though no one else ever did.

To get away from these home troubles, I agreed to enjoy a holiday for three months and take a tour in Scotland, and to carry this out I bought a carriage, and sent to England for my horse and placed him in a livery stable. In about five days the head ostler called me aside and said, "Do not sell that horse, sir, we have never had such a one in our yard for years." "Of course not," I answered, "why should I?" "Well, your brother has said that he wishes you were well rid of him, for you are always troubled about him," and then in a whisper, "See him fed yourself." Unable to do this, and unwilling to cast a slur upon the stables by removing him to a neighbouring yard, I wrote to my new medical acquaintance, asking him as a favour to let the horse be placed under his coachman's care, to which he kindly consented.

Here, then, was my delusion returning, and my only cure must be a residence in his aslyum. My wife, under his direction, signed the petition for my detention. He undertook to procure the certificates of Lunacy from his friends, and going out to see my horse at his request, I was informed by his partner that I was in an EXCEEDINGLY EXCITED STATE OF MIND, and so I vanished from the world for two years, during which I in vain attempted to regain my liberty by making the following appeals and receiving the following answers:—

## CHAPTER IV.

### APPEALS.

### ANSWERS.

1. To the proprietors of Asylm, to be allowed to see any medical men or those whose certificates *they* had obtained;  
Or to see my wife.

2. To the Commissioners, simply stating my case and requesting a visit, or that they would send any two M.D.'s of their own selection at my own expense.

3. To the Chairman of a committee on Lunacy then sitting, asking that I might be sent for to give evidence. To get this letter out of the Asylum cost me £4, and the servant instant dismissal.

4. To the Commissioners, requesting them to forward an enclosed letter to my friend, Mr. Bass, M.P., with whom I had dined a week before I had left my home.

5. To my wife, asking her to come and judge for herself, whether I was not perfectly well.

6. To a brother-in-law, asking him to believe his own senses instead of trusting to medical reports.

1. That I had seen quite enough medical men, and they would not allow it.

Impossible.

2. That my statement was at variance with other information about me, and that they declined to comply with my request.

3. From Mr. Spencer Walpole, referring me to the Commissioners. This letter was opened by the medical proprietors, and on my refusing then or on another occasion to say how I had sent letters from *his* house, the senior proprietor ordered a blister as, I suppose he described, needful treatment.

4. Letter returned to the proprietors, with one to me, saying that it was not their business to forward patients' letters.

5. That if I was bodily ill, she would come and nurse me, but as I was "*mentally ill*," she could do me no good.

6. That he would willingly give £500 to see me restored to health, but as *I had consulted the doctors, I must abide by their decision.*

## APPEALS.

7. Out for a walk, I went at once to Dr. Laycock, the chief Medical expert in Edinburgh, and asked him to see my wife at the Bridge of Allan, and assure her that I was perfectly sane and in good health, paying him and another M.D. £2 each for their promised good offices. I had not the slightest intention of escaping.

8. That seeing the Royal train pass by on the way to Balmoral, I addressed a respectful letter to Her Majesty, asking that someone whom she might appoint might come and test my sanity and procure my release, promising one of the attendants a handsome remuneration if he would stamp and post it.

9. To Mr. Griffith, an eminent surgeon and practitioner at Wrexham, whom my family constantly consulted by letter, and to whom I believe they described my activity of mind and body, and who upon their statements had, without seeing me, suggested that I should consult some medical man with the fear that my brain must be in a critical state.

10. To the Commissioners, claiming them as by law my guardians, and telling them that whenever I annoyed the proprietors of the Asylum I was punished by a blister being ordered for me.

11. To my relations asking them to send up any of my parishioners who were told that I was no better, and many of whom were praying for my recovery.

Transferred by fresh certificates from Dr. Laycock and Dr. Skae, the head Physician of Morningside, who pronounced me now *incoherent* and *imbecile*, and finding myself in an English asylum,

12. Wrote more than once to the Commissioners in London, requesting them to let me have a Commission of Lunacy.

13. Called on one of them, Mr. Ireland, and asked his good offices with his fellow magistrates.

14. Went over to Bath to see a M.D., a Mr. George, in whom my wife had the greatest confidence, asking him to write to her, and trust her own senses.

## ANSWERS.

7. He instantly sent off to the Asylum, reporting where I might be found, and enticed me out of the hotel by proposing to find me a quiet lodgings at Trinity, while he communicated with my wife.

8. If it ever reached Balmoral it must have been detained by the Secretary of State, as no answer ever came.

9. This letter, when out for a walk with an attendant, being unable to post, I dropped in the public road, in the hope that some kind person picking it up would forward it; but if ever it reached its destination, I received no reply.

10. That they considered it very *judicious treatment*, and they declined to interfere.

11. As they could do me no good there was no use applying to them, and advising me in my melancholy state, instead of resisting the doctors, to co-operate with them in the means they were using for my restoration.

12. Referred by them to the visiting justices.

13. The visiting justices had no power to order my discharge, which rested altogether with the Commissioners.

14. No sooner had I stated my case, and whence I had come, than he instantly telegraphed to the Asylum to come and capture me. I had, however, not the slightest intention of escaping, which I had promised not to do.

## APPEALS.

15. To the Lord Chancellor, asking for a Commission of Lunacy, or a Writ of Habeas Corpus to transfer me to London.

15A. The same to the Lord Chief Justice.

16. To my county member, Mr. Puller, M.P.

17. To Mr. Gladstone, then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

18. To my Bishop, requesting him to use his influence with those in authority to procure me a Commission of Lunacy. The Commissioners, in reply I think to some other letters, sent word that I was to have a change of air and scene, and, I believe, hinted that if I was not removed by my friends they would discharge me.

## AFTER MY DISCHARGE.

19. To my Bishop, requesting him to appoint any number of clergymen or gentlemen to enquire into the whole case, and take evidence as to my conduct during the last two years from matrons, attendants, &c., in both Asylums.

20. I took advice on the whole case from a legal firm in Edinburgh.

21. Upon my removal to Brislington I wrote to Dr. Lowe requesting him to return a packet of letters and papers of which he had deprived me (if not by force at least against my will), which, among other memorandums relating to the Asylum, contained a supposed Mental examination of my dog by two of his species, one the property of the doctor, who gave certificates as to his excitement, without which he could not be admitted into the Asylum.

## ANSWERS.

15. No reply.

15A. No reply.

16. That he had no power to interfere; with kind wishes for my restoration to health and usefulness.

17. That he had read my letter with much commiseration for my state, but with the idea that I was applying in the wrong quarter.

18. He sent some clergyman who found me as he implied, and I suppose thought, "*with nothing whatever the matter with me*," but what he reported to the Bishop I am ignorant.

19. That he was unable to take any steps in the matter, but should be glad to see me resuming my duties among my parishioners, who, however, did not see me for nearly six years, and except for my wife's entreaties, never would have seen me again. I stayed away five years, hoping that the Bishop would take proceedings to compel me to reside in my parish.

20. That as I was unwilling to proceed against the doctors who had been persuaded by the Asylum M.D. to sign my certificates without any examination whatever, and did so from a kind though mistaken feeling, I could not proceed against that gentleman, who was protected by the sheriff's order which he had himself procured; and that the uncertainty of obtaining a verdict was so great that I must deposit £1,200 for expenses before they would take up the case, and that I could not sue *in forma pauperis*.

21. That he had sent my letter to the commissioner, Dr. Coxe, who authorised him to detain and destroy every writing except those addressed to the Commissioners, and therefore he had retained all but the letters, which, with his to me, he had forwarded open to Dr. Fox, and which I obtained about eighteen months afterwards. He retained the letters from the Commissioners, and also that from Mr. Spencer Walpole. (See Appendix.)

## CHAPTER V.

I here subjoin the substance of one of the papers above referred to :—

## IMAGINARY EXAMINATION.

We, Dr. Slowboy and Dr. Snap, Resident Examiners for Saughton Hall, Edinburgh, do declare that owing to his dangerous character we have jointly examined Mr. Gyp, of Shenley, Herts, and that he is of UNSOUND MIND, and a proper subject for detention in the Asylum, and we have come to this decision from OUR OWN OBSERVATION. That he is in a very excited state of mind, that when we tested his bodily health in the usual caudal canine manner he seemed restless and used some threatening language, which, being English, we did not understand, but when we approached to test him mentally by examining his head, he suddenly threw down Dr. Snap on his back and declared that he would do the same to anyone who touched him. We observe that he at times rushes frantically about, and jumps over gates and hedges without any cause, bringing back useless stones and sticks.

## FACTS INDICATING INSANITY MENTIONED BY OTHERS.

Mr. Ginger declares that he attempted to commit suicide by plunging into the Water of Leith, and into the Forth on Whit Sunday; that he tried in vain, with canicidal intentions, to persuade him to join him in the water; that when at Aldbury he attempted to drown three little children by seizing the hoop of one to whom the others clung and dragging them all into the pond; that he insisted upon depriving him of a stick, and that he constantly would pretend to be dead and suffer himself to be dragged about without moving, and that when he (Mr. Ginger) was asked what he deserved for eating his companion's dinner, Mr. Gyp instantly went away and appeared immediately with a small dog whip.

Mr. Gyp, having no wife or any known relations to sign a petition to the Sheriff, was admitted as a patient without the usual formalities. If the proprietors of the Asylum made any report on his state of mind to the Medical Commissioners with these certificates, they are according to rule not to be disclosed, being *confidentially communicated*.

## CHAPTER VI.

## AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM.

PHYSICIAN *versus* LUNATIC.

DR. SKAE, Head Physician of the Public Asylum, certifies that the Rev. Henry Justinian Newcome is of unsound mind because he says, "That he has invented a stove which will heat a room by the consumption of a newspaper in it ; that it will yield him an enormous amount of money ; that he is divinely commissioned to reform prostitutes by this money ; and that the Devil has tempted man to say that he is mad to prevent this good work ; that he believes he is specially predicted in the Scriptures in those prophecies relating to the Saviour ; mentioned by Dr. Lowe, of Saughton Hall."

## LUNATIC'S VERSION.

He is unable to distinguish which are the facts indicating insanity observed by Dr. Skae, and which are the facts communicated by Dr. Lowe.

Dr. Skae introduced the subject of my invention, the specifications for a patent of which I had signed some months before in Saughton Hall, and the patent had been sealed on the 27th January, just six weeks previously. I explained as well as I could that if a heap of paper was lit in the room in which we were, the heat and smoke would be so unbearable that we could not remain a minute in it ; that a single newspaper consumed in a clean pipe made of thin iron or tin would be so hot for 30 feet certainly, and probably 60 feet, that it could not be touched without pain, and that my invention consisted in carrying out this well-known principle. It was manifest that he who was paid to find me insane considered my mention of the patent as a perfect *delusion*. I do not remember that any of the other subjects were even mentioned, and suppose that they were communicated by Dr. Lowe.

As for the enormous amount of money, I may have said that I did not know what such an invention might be worth if it were universally carried out. My idea of *reforming prostitutes* was a perversion of an expression that "prostitution would never be put down till seduction was made a criminal offence, and every seducer should be compelled, according to the eternal law of God, which was given to protect the weak against the strong, to either marry his victim or provide for her maintenance to prevent her taking to the streets."

Respecting the Devil having something to do with my being in a mad-house, surely the father of lies must in some way have spread the report, and caused at least 2,000 persons to believe it, that I was in some miserable condition of health (and they would of course believe the report of my death), talking nonsense, now in a state of excitement, now melancholy and resisting all the doctor's efforts to cure me, when anyone might have come night or day, at any hour, to believe his own senses instead of being kept away by the belief that a visit might be prejudicial to my recovery.

Again, "as to believing that I was specially predicted in the Scriptures in those prophecies relating to the Saviour," I can only explain such a perversion by recalling a day when Dr. Lowe found me, as usual, lying on a sofa, when, in answer to a question whether I was always reading the Bible, I suppose that I referred him to the Psalm as very applicable to myself. "I became a reproof among all my enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and they of my acquaintance were afraid of me, and they that did see me without conveyed themselves from me." I am clean forgotten as a dead man out of mind, &c. And, again, "it was not an open enemy that hath done me this dishonour, for then I could have borne it. But it was thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend, &c., &c."

#### PHYSICIAN No. 2.

Dr. Laycock, the great Medical authority on Mental disorders.

Who had suggested the subject on which to examine

me I am ignorant, but it was nearly precisely the same line as Dr. Skae had chosen. In both there was the mention of a stove which was claimed as my invention, while the word "*stove*" had never entered my head, my apparatus consisting merely of five or six lengths of smoke flue, with several returns, which abstracted most of the heat from flaming fuel of any sort. Dr. Laycock had evidently been reading the well-known story of an old woman in St. Luke's, who was always giving away six million pounds among her friends.

I must give the result of his examination in his own words before I make any remarks upon them. Mark that by this time, twenty-four hours after the visit of Dr. Skae, I had lapsed into an *imbecile* state. He says that the facts indicating insanity observed by himself were:—  
" His INCOHERENT conversation and IMBECILE manner ; he told me that he had invented a stove which would bring him £6,000,000 per annum, and had arranged for the distribution of the money in a laudable object ; that he had written to the House of Commons about his invention."

So grossly ignorant was this gentleman that I could not get him to acknowledge the fact that a metal pipe in a room produced more warmth than an upright brick chimney. He reverted to the "*stove*." How valuable did I think my invention to be ? Did I think it worth six million pounds ? I answered that if universally adopted it might save more than that sum in fuel to the country. " Then you expect to make six million pounds ? " " No ; I intend to make nothing by it." " But it is patented in this and other countries." This was manifestly (though a simple fact) my delusion. " Have you not written to the House of Commons about it ? " " No ; I wrote to the Chairman of a Select Committee requesting him to send for me as I could give some valuable information about asylums." So we parted.

And now for the information which he received from others. He affirms " that various statements he made me as to his dog being poisoned by women, his goods being pilfered, of conspiracies and the like, are

founded on delusion ;" communicated by Thos. W. Winter, Esq. This informant was my wife's brother,\* and had come to effect my transfer to England, and had paid these two medical men to assist him in the matter. He knew nothing whatever about any of the subjects he brought to Dr. Laycock's knowledge, and I have not the slightest remembrance that I was asked a single word on the matter ; for as I never had suspected for a moment that any woman had drugged my dog, but that it was a discharged servant whom the dog had discovered concealing himself on my premises at four in the morning, I must at once have explained the mistake. There is little doubt that something was given to the dog a day or two after, for I could not arouse him from a deep sleep for some hours, when he passed some horrible black matter, which was analysed by Dr. Alfred Taylor, at Guy's Hospital, who sent me a certificate that he could not detect any poison, but was at a loss to account in any way for any medicine which could have produced such an effect. As to goods being pilfered, I discovered with the advice and presence of the police-sergeant, in a neighbouring house articles of grocery exactly corresponding with goods I had in store in this servant's custody, and which had been opened, and especially several sheets of emery paper, of which there was a large quantity in my wife's storeroom, and which bore the mark of a certain maker, whose goods were not, I believe, sold in our village shops. The magistrate at Barnet said that as I could not swear to the articles I had found as being mine, he could not commit, but it was a case of GRAVE SUSPICION, whereupon a local attorney who had heard the case,

\* This gentleman, who had been reading about "obscure diseases of the mind and brain," had six months before talked to me about there being "one string out of tune," as being sufficient reason for my residence in an Asylum. My one string then was the possibility of a servant being dishonest. An extra string had now gone wrong, in the undue value I put upon a very simple discovery I had made as to saving three-fourths of any fuel used for warmth, on which he must have requested the two M.D.'s to examine me.

advised my servant to bring an action against me for false imprisonment, which, when I was safely lodged in an Asylum, was brought, and being undefended, cost me £150.

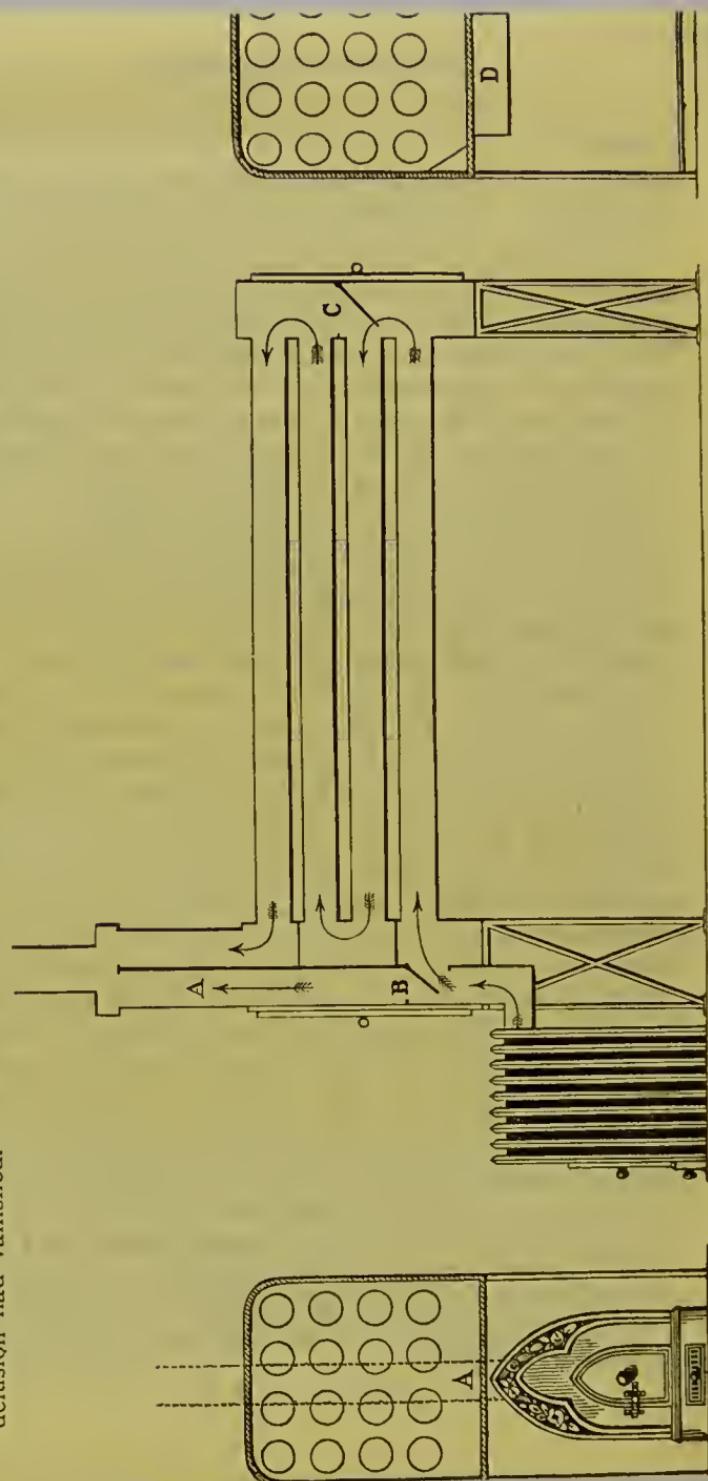
To explain this matter more fully, the discharged servant put himself forward as an injured innocent, and challenged me to prove my suspicions to be true. I knew that there must be a receiver, and instead of applying for a search warrant, before which being obtained all traces of lost property might be removed, I went direct into a neighbour's house and discovered exactly similar articles as above described, and by the sergeant's advice gave the man into custody.

The simple story about my suspicions about my domestics, as far as I know it is this. Owing to a stoppage of a drain which led from the water-closet, I had it opened, and discovered that a large torn white handkerchief had been passed through the pan. This must have been done by one of the servants, and when I lost a pair of kid gloves and was making enquiry about them, I strongly suspected that to avoid discovery a young woman who looked very alarmed had made away with the gloves in the same manner. I had but a few days before, on passing her when going to church, casually asked her whether she had seen a collar which a little dog had lost, and the start that she gave and look of alarm made me suspect that she knew something about it. I believe that the real cause of her frightened looks was the idea that I was going out of my mind, of which she must have heard. I thought nothing more of the matter, and should never have thought of mentioning such a thing to the Edinburgh doctors, yet this was the *delusion* which they both affirmed that I was suffering from, and about which they had examined me, and which had been reported to them by my wife. It must have been for this mistaken opinion of mine, and for nothing else—for I have, I think, quite disposed of the charge of excited brain—that I was detained for nine months in an asylum.

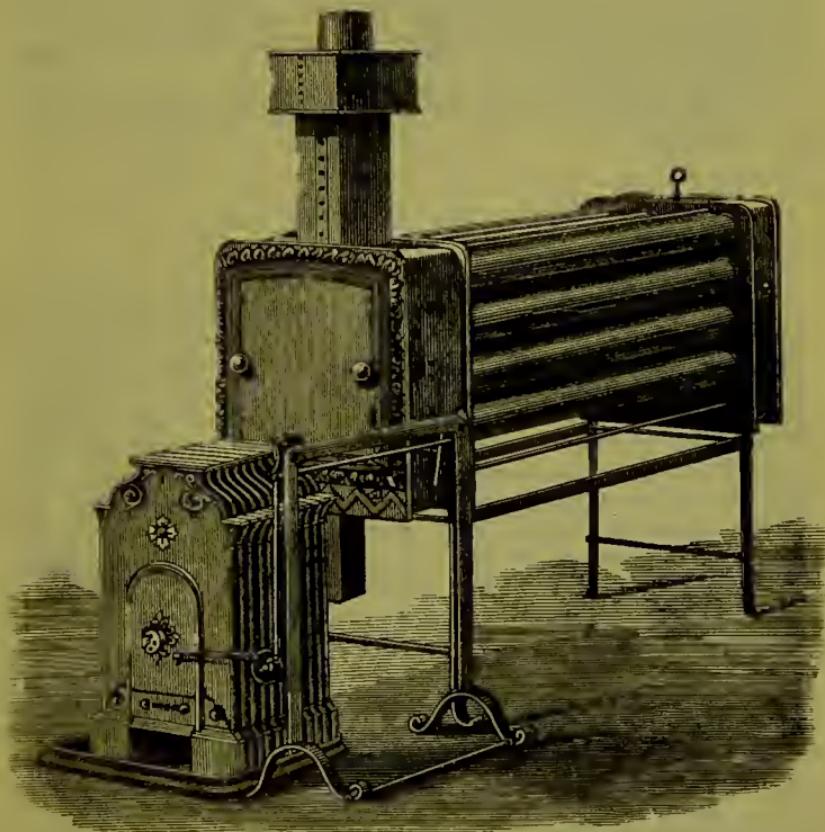
And now to come to further medical certificates and my rebutting evidence.

(Continued on page 29.)

THE Inventor and Pattee of this Tubular Warming Apparatus being at a loss to convince two eminent Edinburgh Medical Experts in Mental Disorders that more heat might be obtained by this method than by a common open fire, and being also unable to find them understanding as well as an argument, was pronounced by them to be *incoherent* and *imbecile*, and was committed by their certificates to a Lunatic Asylum at the cost of about £5 5s. per week for fifteen months, when the Commissioners in Lunacy ordered his discharge, supposing that his delusion had vanished.



## CHAPTER VII.



For this very Invention, about which I was pronounced incoherent and imbecile, I obtained Honourable Mention at the Smoke Exhibition in 1882, "AND THE FOLLOWING IS THE REPORT OF THE JURY AT THE SMOKE ABATEMENT EXHIBITION, SOUTH KENSINGTON":--

## CLASS VI. AIR HEATING. W. COAL.

"The efficiency of the Tubular Air Warmer (the Multitubular Chimney) and the low Temperature in the Chimney 90° are due to the greatly developed Radiating and Conducting Surface of the tubes; and the moderate degree of Smoke was arrived at partly by the deposit of Soot in the circulating pipes. The temperature 90° contrasts with the probable temperature 200° which would have been reached in the Chimney if the draught had been direct."

This proves that more than three-fourths of the fuel was saved.

## CERTIFICATE.

I, George Crocombe Carter, was sexton at Shenley in the year 1859, and for some years following. I had the charge of the lighting and warming the chapel. In January of that year a new furnace was erected, and a number of large iron pipes placed one over the other, and connected to form a continuous flue, about 50 feet long, carried the smoke away. The first night it was used the heat all over the chapel was so great that several of the congregation complained, and though it was frosty weather a window was opened. It was found that this result was obtained by the consumption of less than half a bushel of coals. The pipes collected the whole of the soot, so that no black smoke was seen to escape. When the fire was nearly exhausted and the upper range of pipes grew cold, condensed water of an offensive nature escaped, and there being no second chimney to bring into use through which the heated smoke might have been discharged, the pipes after a second winter were taken down, and the furnace removed. A portable chimney composed of tin plates, and heated by a common ironing stove was substituted. Two of these flues placed side by side supplied sufficient warmth to every part of the building, measuring 24,000 cubic feet. There was never more than a large scuttle of coke with some small coal consumed between the hours of half-past one and six. These chimneys not being in constant use, in about three years became un-serviceable through rust. Not being so long as the former flue pipes, there was never any condensation, and very little soot was found in the pipes when the covers were opened for sweeping.

GEORGE C. CARTER.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Dr. Fox was compelled by the Lunacy Acts to, within ten days of the reception of a patient, transmit the certificates and his own report on my state of mental and bodily health and condition. This latter he allowed was good. I wish that he had enjoyed half as much. But he certifies that on the 24th March (eight days after my reception) "he had seen and examined Henry Justinian Newcome who is in a state of *undue excitement and restlessness*, with delusions on various subjects, that he believes that a conspiracy on the part of his family and others exists against him; that poison was administered to his dog and to his horse, and that several of his domestics were plundering him when at Shenley, and we are assured that no grounds exist for these assertions."

Now, I can only say that this statement of having examined me existed in his own imagination, for I am certain that not a single word on these subjects ever passed between us. Would it be credited that the second or third day of my sojourn in the asylum he took a long walk with me accompanied by his young daughters; that I was allowed freely to associate with them, and I think had spent the evening with them before this certificate was signed; that after two long walks with an attendant I was permitted to go out in the neighbourhood by myself, and was treated as a FRIEND in a way in which no other patient had ever been. Will it be credited that within a few days, either before or after this 24th of March, the elder brother and proprietor should have invited me to dine with some neighbours—being at that time by certificate *incoherent in conversation and imbecile in manner*—and have asked me whenever I spent the evening with him to take his place at the family prayers. It was either a cruel and thoughtless thing to expose a poor afflicted creature to the pity of strangers, or it proved that his patient had in a most singular way, without any treatment at all,

immediately recovered by a change of scene, or that he never gave any credit to the Certificates in the smallest degree. I suppose that I was spoken of as one of those patients who are perfectly sane on every point but one, and that the guests were guarded not to speak upon that one subject which would excite me and set me off. Gentlemen who deal with mental diseases must often be in a difficulty, but they must all hang together or the whole system would be exploded. I have never been able to understand why those who by the Spirit of God may have the "gifts of healing" should also claim to be able to exercise the power of "discerning of spirits," which, I suppose, may include the distinguishing between the sane and the insane, and the sooner this exclusive claim is abolished by law so much the better.

I am far from affirming or even thinking for a moment that there was a conspiracy between at least eight Edinburgh physicians, viz., two Commissioners, two Asylum Proprietors, and four Certifying M.D.'s, against me, but they were certainly all well acquainted with each other, and would naturally back up the opinion of the President of the Royal College, not supposing for one moment that he could have been in error. As for the certificates of Drs. Laycock and Skae, they were paid to find me of unsound mind, were primed, I know not by whom, to start a subject of which they knew absolutely nothing, and would, no doubt, have certified that I was quite recovered from some supposed excitement had there been any wish to set me free.

I fear that some who read this account will say, that I was served right for going to consult the Doctors on a fool's errand. It was indeed a mild symptom of insanity. Caught, as Gil Blas describes himself, like a rat in a trap, I might adopt the words of one who wrote his own epitaph:—

I was well;  
I wished to { be better;  
I went to the Doctor—  
And here I am.

I publish this singular story in the hope that several

amendments in the new Lunacy Bill may be introduced before it passes the third reading. I may be esteemed highly presumptuous in suggesting that—

1st. Private asylums should be open to any respectable person who wishes to study the subject of Lunacy and will promise the Commissioners to disclose only to them any information he may obtain respecting the patients. I fortunately did find two or three perfectly sane persons with whom I could converse, and a visitor would otherwise have been most acceptable to one who had to walk round a walled enclosure for nine long months among some twenty of his afflicted fellow creatures.

2nd. That the appointed judge should take the evidence of the attendants and matrons, and that the Commissioners should not depend only on the medical reports concerning the patients.

3rd. That if any patient is sane enough to demand a Commission of Lunacy, and a disinterested person should declare that there was a *prima facie* case for allowing this, it should be granted.

4th. That the petitioner should be compelled to pay the lunatic a visit every few months. I can positively affirm that a gentleman whom the doctor called "that madman" was not insane at all, nor was ever visited. He might have been ill when first brought there, but he had long since recovered. He did not know what to do when the Commissioners arrived, and so stood up perfectly mute, and no word was ever said by them to him. I called a year after my release upon two aunts to assure them that though their nephew might be from temper disagreeable to reside with, there was nothing the matter with him, when I was met with the question "What possible right had I to interfere with them?" and was requested to leave their house. I suppose that, like most of the others, he has been long dead. For another, who had been there for years, and was my only constant companion, I paid a physician two guineas to visit him and report his case to me, that I might take steps for his release, but I never again heard of the matter. I have before this published

a pamphlet, "What are Delusions?" \* Certainly at least two thousand persons were under the delusion that in some unknown manner I was for two years suffering from some form of disease when I was every moment of that time in as perfect health as can well be imagined. But the subject among my relations is studiously avoided, and I can see that whenever it crops up accidentally among those of my acquaintance who may have heard of my history, it is as quickly turned aside as possible in consideration for my feelings. I leave now my various relations and the surviving partner of the asylum to settle the matter between them. Well might he say, "I should never have thought about you if your wife and sister had not come to consult me about you." If I have mis-stated anything in these pages I will willingly acknowledge it if it is pointed out, and will give the same publicity to any answers which my plain statements may draw forth.

---

## CHAPTER IX.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

*Letter from Dr. LOWE to his ex-patient, who has requested him to forward a parcel of letters of which he had deprived him.*

BALGREEN,

DEAR SIR,

March 22nd.

I regret the tone of your letter to me, as it is really addressed to one who would gladly be of service to you were he able. I am in the habit of taking no step without consulting the Commissioners, and therefore, before replying to your letter, I forwarded to them

---

\* "What are Delusions? An Episode in the Life of an Inventor." Price 4d. The Authors' Alliance, 59 & 60 Chancery-lane.

for perusal your letter and asked their advice. I received the following reply this morning, and lose no time in forwarding it :—

## GENERAL BOARD OF LUNACY,

DEAR SIR,

EDINBURGH, 21st March.

In reply to yours of yesterday's date regarding the letters written by the Rev. H. Newcome while one of your patients, it will be enough to state that the Medical Commissioners regard all letters written by a patient in an Asylum as under the entire control of the Superintendent and Proprietor, to forward, destroy, or otherwise dispose of, as he may see fit, with the single exception of letters addressed to the Board of Lunacy.

Yours,

JAMES COXE.

To. W. H. LOWE, Esq., M.D.

It is in accordance with this that I have retained your *writings*, for they cannot be called letters. . . . . As to Dr. Skae, I was in bed when he called with instructions from Mr. Winter to see you, and with Dr. Laycock\* I had not a word, for in reply to my asking him whether he would see the patient, or would have any information from Dr. Smith, who was present, he said, "Oh no, I have seen Mr. Newcome before; just let me see him." And now let me say, that if I can give you pleasure by corresponding with you, which the unfriendly tone of your letter does not encourage me to think, and if I can be of use at any future time, when you see more clearly and judge more correctly, I am at your service, otherwise let correspondence cease.

Yours sincerely,

W. H. LOWE.

\* This is the GENTLEMAN to whom I applied in Edinburgh, and paid £2 2s. to go to the Bridge of Allan to see my unhappy wife, and who instantly betrayed me to the Proprietors of the Asylum. He looked, and I hope felt, very much ashamed on this second interview, when I taxed him with the trick he had been guilty of, and excused himself by saying, "I thought I was doing the best for you."

To W. H. LOWE, Esq., M.D., formerly Resident  
Superintendent of Saughton Hall, Edinburgh.

DEAR SIR,—The letter which I received from you, dated March 22nd, 1860, a week after I had been transferred from Saughton Hall to Brislington, requested that all correspondence between us might cease. I am sorry to be obliged to renew that correspondence, and must ask you to answer the following questions, which in a court of law I should put to you by my counsel:—

1. Did you not on the 16th June, 1859, being forbidden by law to sign a certificate yourself, make a catspaw of two of your friends, dictate to them what to say; having asked me to accompany you for a drive to see them, but with my wife's petition in your pocket, and carry their certificates to the Sheriff, and asking me as a friend to call upon you, entrap me into your Asylum?

2. Did you not, after looking in vain for any symptom of excitement which you had persuaded your medical friends to affirm that they saw, request me, while I continued a resident in the Asylum, to conduct Divine worship on a Sunday (which for one Sunday I did) with a congregation of more than thirty patients, matrons, and attendants?

3. Can you bring forward a single person among the attendants, matrons, or sane patients, if any are now living, to say that I ever for one single moment during nine months showed the slightest symptom of a disordered mind, though by the certificates you procured declared to be a Lunatic?

4. If ill, and in a state of excitement when I walked voluntarily into your Asylum, what means did you or your partner, Dr. Smith, take to subdue that excitement, and make me better? and when I asked him what was the matter with me, did he not in your hearing reply that I was always laughing?—a most uncommon thing in your Asylum, except by one poor idiot.

5. Were you not thoroughly ashamed whenever he ordered me to be blistered? and I ask you, what reports

did you make to the Commissioners about such treatment, which reports the present ones refuse to give me, on the plea that they were *confidential communications*, but which I hope and intend yet to obtain ?

6. Did you not, having suggested to your medical brethren to certify that I was suffering from " delusions about conspiracies among his relations, and suspicions of the honesty of neighbours, domestic, and others," not one word of which was ever mentioned by me, finding yourself in a difficulty, try by all means to prove those delusions to be real ?

7. Did you not suggest to the Commissioner, Dr. Brown, to ask me whether I had had any losses of property, and put that forward as the delusion for which I was detained ?

8. Did you not supply your medical brethren with the idea that I had " exaggerated opinions about myself "— and from whom did you obtain it ? and is it true, as Dr. Skae says, that you informed him that I thought that I was specially predicted in the Scriptures in those prophecies relating to the Saviour ?

Can you explain the following discrepancies in the petition and certificates which you obtained on June 16th, 1859 ? In the petition it is stated in answer to the question, " Where found and examined." 2 Maitland Street, Edinburgh, whereas the certificates state the private residences of the physicians, 10 St. Colme Street, and 53 Queen Street ; and from whom did you obtain the information communicated to Dr. Wood that " he had exaggerated ideas regarding himself ? " Again, in your letter to me, which you sent open for the perusal of Dr. Fox, you say, " As to Dr. Skae, I was in bed when he called with instructions from Mr. Winter to see you ; " leading one to suppose that he was unable to see you, whereas his certificate says that he obtained the whole of his information from Dr. Lowe of Saughton Hall.

Have you any objection to the Commissioners furnishing me with the various reports you made respecting me during my residence under your care, which they decline to give on the plea that they were *con-*

fidentially communicated? Perhaps you have kept some such records, and can furnish them yourself. I am anxious to know whether under the skilful treatment which has been supposed to have saved my life, I had in the course of nine months in YOUR opinion lapsed into that state of *incoherency in conversation* and *imbecility of manner* in which Dr. Laycock certifies that he found me?

It is evident that you were attempting to justify your conduct by making out everything which you thought would tell against me. It is a pity that you were not as open with me as I was with you. When I saw Dr. Sutherland a month before, I offered to stay with him as long as he wished, and I would willingly have done the same with you; indeed, I offered, as you may remember, to stay and dine with you, that I might convince you that I was not in an excited state at all. You did not the next day accept my proposal to put matters right by bringing Drs. Wood and Dunsmure to help to get you out of a difficulty which could then easily have been done, and you will now, I fear, experience the truth of my PROPHETY that I should prove the most troublesome patient that you ever had in your Asylum.

If you consider this letter to be of the nature of a libel, I will gladly submit to the judgment of a jury, or even, if you prefer it, to twelve of the highest medical experts in the kingdom, who may examine me on any subject I am acquainted with.—I am, yours faithfully,

HENRY J. NEWCOME.

---

I understand that Saughton Hall is greatly altered under a very different proprietor, and the kindest treatment of the unfortunate inmates, and my residence at Brislington has led to the formation of life-long friendships with former acquaintance, and a dreadfully idle life is the only thing of which I can complain.

## CHAPTER X.

## CONCLUSION.

---

A LUNATIC'S ADVICE.

---

1st. To my Married Lady Friends and to Married Ladies in General.—Do not, if your husband looks a little altered, fly off to an unknown Medical Man (unless you think he may be dangerous to himself or others), and let him be entrapped into an Asylum, and run away from him for months; but remember that you promised to keep him in sickness and health, and at least get a peep at him or send a trustworthy friend to do so, instead of trusting to any Medical Reports. And do not judge harshly of, or laugh at, my good and over-anxious and affectionate partner. She has, unfortunately, an unbounded confidence in Specialists, and a dread even of a drunken man, much more of an insane one. I have known her nearly driven into hysterics by hearing an old woman in an adjoining room singing Scotch Psalms and learning she was deranged; and I have seen her run in terror and put a gate between herself and an excited woman who came out of her house to speak to me. Very likely she is not singular in this respect.

2nd. To Medical Men who deal with Mental Diseases.—If you find that you have been grossly misled, and have made a mistake, confess it at once, and try to rectify the error, instead of drawing others into trouble by suggesting subjects to prove a person insane. What begins wrong can never come right.

3rd. To Relations and Friends.—Do not consider that a mere delusion, as you term it, is a sufficient cause for depriving your relative of liberty; and if it is needful, choose some public Asylum where

it is probable he will find some society instead of having to pace for months round an enclosure with only attendants to speak to. They certainly, whatever others might say, considered that I was "the right man in the right place," for I believe that I made that Asylum to be otherwise than what a parishioner of mine described as a "Silent," into which some relative had been placed, thought she did not know what a "Silent" meant.

4th. To My Countrymen Generally.—If any of you find yourself in limbo, do not get angry or sulky, for that will be a sure proof that you are either excited or depressed, and will be reported so to the Commissioners, and believed, naturally, by them; and you may find that there are worse companions than even the most hopeless Lunatics.

---

THE END.

---

# AN EX-LUNATIC'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF;

— OR, —

*An Episode in the Life of an Inventor.*

IF I am asked how I can account for the opinion entertained by my relations, and perhaps my parishioners and friends, that my mind must have been giving way, I can only refer them to a pamphlet entitled "What are Delusions?"\* for an explanation. I may, however, here give an epitome of what I there have said more fully.

Owing to a chance discovery that three-fourths of all fuel used for warmth might by a very simple combination of a number of thin metal smoke pipes be saved, and that four clean pipes could be heated by the smoke that could pass through one, I wrote to the *Times*; and to give a reference as to my responsibility for my assertions, enclosed a blank cheque on my bankers, that the editor might, if he thought good, mulct me by a fine for deceiving him by false information. Provisional protection had been secured for a patent in this and some foreign countries, but wishing to diffuse the particulars of my discovery as widely as possible, I renounced all prospective profits, and offered free licences for different districts, especially to those who would join in a philanthropic object for the benefit of the country. The letter was signed with my name and address, and scientific men were requested to see and test the invention. The *Times*, however, put my letter in as an advertisement, and filled up my cheque for £17. One gentleman alone thanked me for my letter, to which he gave a flattering epithet, but immediately my more wealthy parishioners, perfectly ignorant of a scientific subject, though they had been for three months benefiting by my apparatus, and enjoying in a warm church the comfort obtained from the consumption of half a bushel of coals, raised the report that I must be going out of my mind, or at least did not contradict it.

At that time the papers were full of addresses of candidates for a seat in Parliament, many putting forward their claims instead of waiting to be asked by some constituency to represent them. I remembered a very remarkable sermon on the text, "Seest thou great things for thyself; seek them not"; and while conscious that any letter to the *Times* on the subject would be thrown aside, I thought it an opportunity of saying a word to thousands who perhaps would never hear the truth in any other way. Here then was "the head and front of my offending," and nothing but deprivation of the power of doing evil or good would be effectual.

But *Magna est veritas et prevalebit*. The opinion of ten hundred thousand that a man must be *insane*, does not in the least degree make him so. Remember Galileo. Not one in a hundred, according to my experience, can appreciate a simple invention and draw an inference as to what it might lead, or can see anything but that before their eyes. Who would have thought that the first little steam-engine would have developed into a great locomotive, or drive 10,000-ton vessels across the ocean?

\* To be had, price 4d., at the Authors' Alliance, 59 Chancery Lane.

The same of electricity. Has not the simple discovery that sugar could be boiled in *vacuo*, diminished the price and saved millions of pounds in fuel? My discovery of a simple means of saving fuel for warmth, so that the poorest of our fellow creatures who can pick up a few sticks, or get a pennyworth of coal, need never shiver in a cold cottage, may in time be taken up by those who have the means, and spread comfort over the land. To parody Dr. Johnson, when selling Thrale's brewery, "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice," I would say, We do not put forward a parcel of iron pipes, or articles of the same sort to be looked at, but the potentiality of giving comfort to hundreds of thousands in all countries beyond the bounds of imagination.

I am asked, what is the use of what has been described as a "rotten stove" (but it is not a stove at all), by one who sits over a fire which consumes 60 lbs. of coal per day and complains that the room is so cold and draughty. "What is the use," says one relation "of another invention which perfectly destroys the smoke issuing from a chimney by meeting it by a descending trickling stream of water. Who would care to be pumping water all day to the top of a chimney?" Such are the unscientific questions I try in vain to answer. "I can only say, come and see for yourself." "Oh," says one lady, "I do not like a great ugly affair that takes up so much room. I am content with a nice little stove that stands in the corner." As well propose to substitute for the locomotive which weighs forty or fifty tons, a neat little gas engine which perpetually revolves in a city shop. "I could not hear to live in such a hot place," says another, when I say that it is all produced by 6 lbs. of coal.

I do not see why landlords should not supply their poor tenants, especially in Ireland, with such an apparatus as I describe, charging a few pence per week for the use of it till the cost is paid. If a room 10 feet square can be warmed for four hours with one halfpenny worth of coal, which can be proved any day, would not that warmth diminish the feeling of hunger to some degree, and make a little rice as sufficient for the sustenance of an English child as it is for the millions of our Indian fellow subjects, who often have nothing besides to support life.

But to return from this digression to myself. My wife, advised on one side, alarmed on another at some alteration in my appearance owing to a bilious fever which lasted only a few days, took advantage of a visit to a Lunatic Doctor to describe me to him, was persuaded to leave me under his care, and when after nine months I was transferred to another Asylum, this very invention which has received Honourable Mention at the Smoke Exhibition in 1882 was given as a proof of my insanity, and as the *delusion* for which it was necessary to detain me another fifteen months, to effect a perfect cure. These certificates were signed by two of the most eminent Medical Mental Experts in Scotland, Drs. Skae and Laycock, whom I could not induce even to listen to my description, and who totally disbelieved the fact that the Complete Specification had been signed by me in that Asylum six months previously, and the Patent sealed and granted not six weeks before my examination.

Five of my different inventions may be seen any day at Mr. North's, London Road, Southwark, and tested in any way that is desired; and a very small royalty will be charged to any iron, copper, or zinc workers who would like to manufacture and improve upon the exhibits there shown, when once a sale has been established.



